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REPORT NO. 2022-06

TO: Ken Burke, CPA, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
Judge Pamela Campbell, Florida Sixth Judicial Circuit
Judge Philippe Matthey, Florida Sixth Judicial Circuit

FROM: Melissa Dondero, Inspector General/Chief Audit Executive *md*

SUBJECT: Status of Investigation of 45 Guardianships
Assigned to Traci Hudson, Former Guardian

DATE: March 18, 2022

Background

On April 25, 2019, the Division of Inspector General (IG) began cooperation with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) and the Office of the State Attorney Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida (SAO) on an investigation into former professional guardian Traci Samuel Hudson's (Hudson) actions as a Power of Attorney. As a result of the PCSO investigation, Hudson was arrested on November 14, 2019, and charged with the exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult, Pinellas County case number 19-13778-CF.

Subsequent to Hudson's arrest, on February 7, 2020, the Florida Sixth Judicial Circuit Court, Probate and Guardianship Division (Court) adjudicated an order appointing the IG *"to investigate the actions of the former guardian, Traci Hudson AKA Traci Samuel concerning the ward's finances, medical care, and any other issue that affects the ward's welfare and best interests"* in thirty-one guardianship cases.

On February 14, 2020, the Court adjudicated an order appointing the IG *"to investigate the actions of the former guardian, Traci Hudson AKA Traci Samuel concerning the ward's finances, medical care, and any other issue that affects the ward's welfare and best interests"* in fourteen guardianship cases.



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The IG Investigators are actively investigating Hudson's 45 guardianship cases. The Investigative Activity Status section below summarizes the current status of the open investigation and provides insight into the IG Investigators' actions and accomplishments to date.

Investigative Activity Status

As of March 18, 2022, the IG Investigators completed a comprehensive analysis of 21 individual guardianship cases assigned to Hudson and drafted 19 individual guardianship case reports.

To date, the IG Investigators:

- Interviewed 11 successor guardians, one Person Subject to Guardianship (PSTG*), 15 individuals with knowledge of the facts, and Hudson.
- Reviewed over 30 boxes of PSTGs' documentation at Hudson's criminal attorney's Richard McKyton's office.
- Collected, reviewed, and delivered 933 pieces of PSTGs' mail from Hudson's abandoned PO Box to the successor guardians and persons legally responsible.
- Reviewed 86 pieces of various mail addressed to Hudson's PSTGs' and delivered to one of Hudson's former PSTG's house.
- Obtained, analyzed, and reconciled hundreds of pages of PSTGs' bank account statements from 24 financial institutions.
- Analyzed more than 1,700 guardianship case-related documents.
- Reviewed 12 real estate sale transactions involving PSTGs' real property.
- Documented 19 investigative findings and 30 related recommendations.

To date, the IG Investigators uncovered potential criminal activity in two guardianship cases. The IG Investigators completed investigative activities in coordination with PCSO detectives and provided documentation to the SAO. As a result, on June 29, 2021, a felony information was filed under Pinellas County case number 21-06080-CF, that charged Hudson with sixteen offenses, which included:

- One count of Exploitation of an Elderly Person or Disabled Adult
- Ten counts of Grand Theft
- One count of Grand Theft From Person 65 Years of Age or Older
- Two counts of Perjury In An Official Proceeding
- Two counts of Perjury By False Written Declaration

In addition, the IG Investigators assisted the PCSO in gathering documentation related to another of Hudson's Power of Attorney cases, Pinellas County case number 21-06079CF.

As a result of the cooperation between the IG and PCSO, Hudson was arrested on June 30, 2021, and charged with one count of Exploitation of an Elderly Person or Disabled Adult in case 21-06079-CF and 16 offences listed above in case 21-06080-CF.

*Pursuant to Section 744.102(22), Florida Statutes, "ward" means a person for whom a guardian has been appointed. The term "ward" is antiquated and considered derogatory, demeaning, and pejorative by many advocates throughout the country. Pinellas County Division of Inspector General serves to protect the dignity and rights of persons who are incapacitated. Therefore, following best practices in guardianship, the Division of Inspector General is using person centered language such as person subject to guardianship (PSTG) except when quoting or referencing Florida Statutes, court documents, or other legal records containing the term "ward."

As of March 18, 2022, during the course of the investigation into Hudson, the IG Investigators have been in cooperation with:

- Office of the State Attorney Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida
- Office of Inspector General, Social Security Administration, Atlanta Field Division
- Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Office of Inspector General
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
- Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Funeral Consumer Services
- JP Morgan Chase Elder Financial Exploitation Unit

This report contains general information related to an ongoing and active investigation. Any information related to this active and ongoing investigation is confidential until the investigation is complete, and the report becomes final.

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